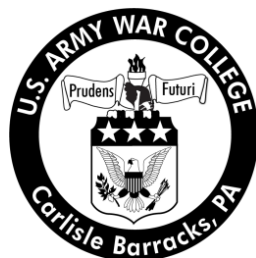


# Strategy Research Project International Fellow

## Estonian National Security Strategy: Current and Future Challenges

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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Russia's realpolitik approach to geopolitics in the Nordic-Baltic region is a serious concern to Estonian present and future. The dynamics of the world grand-political arena can have a negative impact on the Northern-European security environment, and particularly for Estonia. In the foreseeable future, changes in U.S. Grand Strategy, the decline of European military capabilities, and the impact of Russian political, economic and military reforms will force Estonian security policy makers and planners to assess security solutions. Estonia, with very limited resources, and almost non-existent strategic-geographic depth, cannot hope to rely on its own efforts to maintain peace and security. Estonian strategy- makers need to think about adopting an improved deterrence model based on a more comprehensive approach. Estonian strategy should involve not only an all of government approach, but also society in a wider respect, in order to build-up a visible and understandable resilience concept.





# **Estonian National Security Strategy: Current and Future Challenges**

## **Introduction**

Estonian security has never been stronger than today. Estonia is a member of NATO, the European Union (EU) and the euro zone, Estonia also has the fastest growing economy and the lowest debt in the EU. On other hand, security concerns still exist, and global security developments will have a greater impact on Estonia than ever before. Russia has imperial ambitions and its non-democratic regime remains unpredictable in its domestic and foreign affairs. With a strong trans- Atlantic link, and with a well functioning NATO, Estonia is unlikely to witness a kinetic conflict in North-Eastern Europe. Rather Estonia's and other Baltic and Nordic states' security will be challenged within a wider spectrum of threats.

Based on an understanding of the wider security issues my Strategic Research Project will develop a neo-realist answer to the following questions:

- A. If global and regional factors are about to change, is the Estonian Security Strategy, which is based on a comprehensive approach, still relevant?
- B. How can the Estonian security architecture be improved?

The paper is divided into three parts. The first outlines the theory, the second chapter examines the main global factors that are likely to impact the Estonian security situation, and the third chapter will analyze the existing Estonian Security Strategy and offers recommendations.

## **1. Estonian Security Environment: International Relations Theory and Conventional Deterrence.**

*“Even if you are on the right track you will be run over if you just sit there”*

*Will Rogers*

The purpose of this chapter is to bring out a sound security theory in order to support further arguments and suggestions. Based on the neorealist understanding of International Relations, especially in the Copenhagen School of International Relations, the wider approach to security, Regional Security Complex Theory and securitization, will be discussed. At the end of this chapter conventional deterrence and its relation to National Security Strategy is described.

Theory is an abstract concept and can be used differently, depending on the given situation. There are many international relations theories to explain or apply to a situation. The central figure of the Copenhagen School, Barry Buzan, states that: “Security is taken to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile. The bottom line of security is survival, but it also reasonably includes a substantial range of concerns about the conditions of existence.”<sup>1</sup>

### **1.1. Security in wider terms**

Security according to the Copenhagen School is understood in wider terms than the political-military and state-centered view of traditional security studies.<sup>2</sup> According to Buzan, security is a combination of the individual, state and international system while taking possible conflicts between the three levels into account.<sup>3</sup> According to neorealist

theory, states are competing for more security. Unlike in realist theory, where this certainly leads to conflict (use of power), in neorealist theory, the certainty leads to increased security, because relative balance of power is understood. Uncertainty leads to the desire for more security. Buzan stated the Copenhagen School view, “In this approach, security is understood not as the content of a particular sector (military), but as a particular type of politics defined by reference to existential threats and calls for emergency action in any sector.”<sup>4</sup>

### 1.2. Securitization

Based on a wider understanding of security as such, the action against existential (or at least the perception of) threats that legitimize the breaking of the rules are defined as securitization. According to Buzan:

...securitization is a process-oriented conception of security. In other words, while classical approaches of security focus on the material dispositions of the threat including distribution of power, military capabilities, and polarity, securitization examines how a certain issue is transformed by an actor into a matter of security. Securitization is an extreme version of politicization that enables the use of extraordinary means in the name of security.<sup>5</sup>

Securitization does not automatically mean involving military or intelligence services. To solve the issue, in democratic societies those institutions are closely checked to keep them separate from political life. Securitization is a political choice that accepts that an issue is beyond “business as usual”. To achieve needed ends more radical means and ways will be used. Ole Wæver argues that: “Until the invention of the concept of securitization, ‘widening security’ had to specify either the actor (the state) or the sector (military), or else risk the ‘everything becomes security’ trap.”<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3. Security sectors – hard and soft power.

Security “sectors” are in line with theory’s idea to widen the traditional understanding of security. According to the Copenhagen School, the sectors are: military, political, economic, social and environmental. Security sectors can be prioritized or grouped for clarity. Buzan describes these sectors clearly: “...the military sector is about relationship of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationship of authority, governing status and recognition; the economic sector is about relationship of trade, production and finance; the social sector is about relationship of collective identity; and environmental sector is about relationship between human activity and planetary biosphere.”<sup>7</sup>

Militaries around the world use similar terms to speak about elements of national power – DIMEFIL (**D**iplomatic, **I**nformation, **M**ilitary, **E**conomic, **F**inancial, **I**ntelligence and **L**aw Enforcement). They also use a methodology known as PMESII-PT (**P**olitical, **M**ilitary, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **I**nformation, **I**nfrastructure, **P**hysical Environment and **T**ime).

Power is described traditionally as the ability to influence the behavior of others to get a desired outcome. Soft power is the ability to do so without coercion. Realists often dismiss soft power and merely see this as a side effect of military or economic power. American political scientist Joseph Samuel Nye, the ‘inventor of soft power’, argues that: “Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. ... soft power is not merely the same as influence.”<sup>8</sup>

Security sectors are not directly connected to soft or hard power. For example, the military can employ soft power to build up public diplomacy via military to military

relations or as a part of a humanitarian relief mission. The military in Estonia and elsewhere needs to study and fully understand the strengths and limits of soft power.

Securitization of different sectors is connected, but the threats/risks are dealt within different sectors by the logic of the sector. Co-operation of sectors is necessary, especially in Estonia where resources are extremely limited.

#### 1.4. Smart power

Joseph Nye offers an approach - 'smart power' - which is the ability to combine soft power of persuasion and attraction with hard power of coercion and payment.<sup>9</sup> The smart power concept carries an old idea about 'the carrot and stick'. The real art is to establish a common strategic vision, and, balance soft and hard power accordingly. For Estonia, smart power is used to engage in global security dialogue and to draw to the support of allies in the pursuit of Estonia's national security interests. The Estonian Defense Forces' (EDF) experience in Afghanistan, Iraq and other deployments underlines that thinking in terms of smart power is needed from the tactical level to the strategic level. At the strategic level, smart power is the business of several government departments and is determined, ultimately, by the Government Cabinet of Estonia. The Ministry of Defense is responsible for organizing national defense. It takes into account a wider view of security and orchestrates activities in different security sectors as well to exercise balanced use of smart power. However, further cooperation is needed at the Government level. Some thoughts on how to reorganize higher command in Estonia are offered in chapter 3.

### 1.5. Regional Security Complex Theory- where are the Baltic States?

According to Buzan and Wæver, who are the authors of the Regional Security Complex Theory, the world is composed of several subsystems of security complexes; each with different constructions and their own separate dynamics<sup>10</sup>. The US as the only superpower has a global influence and is not tied geographically to a certain security cluster. Inside of a subsystem (region), there is security interdependence between the actors (states). Some states are buffers between the several regions. Russia is an actor in several subsystems (regions), and security concerns in one region will influence its positions or available options in other regions.

In what subsystem (region) do Estonia and the other Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia) belong? Estonia thinks more and more about itself as a one of the Nordic (among Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland) countries.

There are different opinions as to which regional security cluster the Baltic States may belong. But even authors advocating for a Baltic and Northern-European common security complex, such as Stephen Walker, are asking: "Or will the particular configuration of the regional power disparities, nationalist identities, and the lack of a common external threat lead to more than one security strategy and the creation of a security complex based on exercise of both soft and hard power?"<sup>11</sup>

Ole Kværnø and Marie Rasmussen argue: "When trying to position the Baltic states in a security context, the recently attained EU membership and the question whether this has made the Baltic states an integral part of EU-European security complex, therefore seem to be more relevant subjects of analysis. Russia nevertheless still remains a security actor too important in relation to the security of the Baltic states to be excluded from the analysis."<sup>12</sup> According to the Russian point of view, Estonia, as well

as the other Baltic States belongs clearly to this area of influence, or in other words, by the theory discussed above, the Baltic States are part of the Russian security subsystem.

The Chatham House project, which examines the mechanisms that Russia has devised to influence and attract countries in the 'near-abroad', Western Europe, and US security clusters finds that, "Its discourse and policies demonstrate a resolve to maintain a 'zone of privileged interest' in the Baltic region and post-communist Europe, often irrespective of the wishes of the countries concerned."<sup>13</sup>

A wider and more cohesive regional security approach that includes not only the Baltic States and Nordic countries (Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Finland), but also Germany and Poland is in Estonia's best interest. There are positive moves to establish a clear Nordic-Baltic security cluster. Traditionally, neutral Sweden declared that if one of the Baltic States is attacked, Sweden will not remain neutral<sup>14</sup>. The one most important partner will remain the US. Estonia, both bilaterally and within the framework of international organizations, needs to strengthen transatlantic ties with the US.

A Nordic-Baltic security cluster assured by the superpower and supported by other Europeans is a possibility to balance the power in the region and maintain a longlasting peace. To preserve peace, Estonia, with its limited national power, needs to cooperate with other nations to commonly create a counter weight to a larger Russian power. Deterrence theory is based on the assumption that actors (states) are rational and the decision between peace and war is made in clear understanding about of outcome of war.

### 1.6. Conventional Deterrence

It is in Estonia's best interest is to avoid war and still preserve its core values and national interests. One way is deterrence. Deterrence is considered a coercive strategy; its main purpose is to persuade others that they must not act for fear of consequences. Lawrence Freedman in his book *Deterrence* states, "Deterrence can be a technique, a doctrine and a state of mind. In all cases it is about setting boundaries for actions and establishing the risks associated with the crossing of those boundaries."<sup>15</sup>

Deterrence is often discussed only in the framework of the military sector. And even then deterrence is viewed narrowly, taking into account actions across recognized international boundaries within a particular form of warfare. Based on the theory of a widened understanding of security, other security sectors will be involved (and prepared to do so in a timely manner). In a strategic context, the aggressor should be convinced that any aggressive moves will fail to succeed - because within resistance (even if there is militarily success), hurts other sectors in ways that outweigh the possible gains for the invader.

The problem for the defender lies in the time - the coercive actions in other sectors are more likely to take longer time than direct military actions - so, the defender needs to be prepared for a long-term fight. During this time, actions in different security sectors need to be orchestrated and adapted in a timely manner. Estonia, in its deterrence effort would not be alone. Estonia is linked by bilateral relations with other nations, and is a member of NATO and the EU as well.



## **2. The Estonian Security Environment.**

In this chapter, the answer is provided to the question raised in the beginning: If the global and regional factors are about to change, is the Estonian Security Strategy based on a comprehensive approach still relevant? The changes that Estonia is confronting can be described as changes in the existing balance of power. The powers are relative to each other. In the region, Russian economic, and as a result, also its military power is beginning to rise. European political and financial problems are the root of slower economic growth. Relative economic and political weaknesses are causes for the decline in European military power. At the same time, the Asia-Pacific region is demanding more US attention. The question is not only changes in the current balance of power, but also, how much will the power change, and is that change enough to cause friction between the security actors? In many ways, Estonia is like litmus paper, with its position in one of the friction points between the West and Russia.

### **2.1. Threats**

The security threat that is not only most likely but ongoing, is the Russian use of the combination of soft and hard power. Russia's use of military power, which is considered the most dangerous development with grave consequences, is a low probability for Estonia as long as Western liberal values are supported by well working international arrangements.

The majority of experts agree with Maria Mälksoo's statement, that, "Even if it is unlikely that Russia would aim at an open attack or direct military and political takeover

against the Baltic states, the signs of its attempts to disturb the effective functioning of the respective state apparatuses by destabilizing the Baltic societies have nevertheless been clearly visible”.<sup>16</sup>

While the strong trans-Atlantic link is maintained, and NATO, as well as the EU is fully functioning, the biggest threat toward Estonia is Russian hard power other than kinetic military power. That does not mean that military hard power is not important; it is. The paradox of ‘hard power’ is that the stronger Estonia is, the more unlikely it is that it will need to employ “hard power” to defend its independence with weapons.

That leads back to deterrence discussed in chapter 1.5. Estonia needs to be strong enough to hold for some time to allow the NATO alliance or, in a worst case, a coalition of the willing, to deploy and maintain the combat readiness that will deter Russian aggression. Unfortunately the Russian use of military means to threaten or otherwise influence Estonia is not a distant scenario. According, to open sources, “Estonia has recorded 53 air violations between October 2003 and July 2006”.<sup>17</sup>

The answer to Russian aggressive actions has been establishing a NATO air policing mission in the Baltic States. Estonia has been steadily increasing its Host Nation Support and is about to finish the building of the Ämari Air Force base in order to ease the situation at the aging Šiauliai (*Zoknių*) Airfield in Lithuania.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia has more than doubled its military spending since 2006 and spent nearly four percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defense in 2010.<sup>18</sup> Russia, whose capability to spend more on armaments has been steadily increasing thanks to favorable prices in the world energy market, has been taking steps to improve its offensive capabilities. In the

following chapter the Russian military reform and its impacts on Estonia are discussed. 'The report identifies NGOs, a strong relationship with the media, legal action, and the Russian Orthodox Church, as key tools of Russia's 'soft propaganda'. ...Put simply, Russian attempts at soft power do not adequately conceal their intent towards facilitating hard power.'<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2. The Clash of Russian Federation and Estonian

### Interests from a Geopolitical Perspective

Russia is actively looking for possibilities to change the existing single polar world and grow its power, at the expense of the USA and Russian neighboring countries. In the views of the Kremlin:

The world should be multi-polar. A single-pole world is unacceptable.

Domination is something we cannot allow. We cannot accept a world order in which one country makes all the decisions, even as serious and influential a country as the United States of America. Such a world is unstable and threatened by conflict... there are regions in which Russia has privileged interests. These regions are home to countries with which we share special historical relations.<sup>20</sup>

The 'special relationship' between Estonia and Russia includes 41 armed conflicts, or more frankly, wars. Through history, Russia has attempted to suppress the Estonian culture, language, and religion, in order to change the nation living in this part of the Baltic coast.

One way to describe the constant conflict is to use Huntington's <sup>21</sup> views concerning the clash of civilizations, where cultural differences between Estonia (Protestant West with liberal democratic values) meets with Russia (Russian Orthodox, East with its autocratic type of governance). The centuries of Estonian- Russian clashes have built cultural resilience. Historian Toivo Raun describes the Soviet era Russification: "Despite the growing Russian presence in Estonia, almost no cultural Russification occurred among the ethnic Estonian population. In 1989 1,1 percent of Estonians indicated that they spoke another language (*Russian*) habitually."<sup>22</sup> Cultural and historical resilience is important also in Estonia today.

Widely discussed in Russia is the geopolitical point of view. Russia's geopolitical goal is to reach "natural borders" – the Baltic Sea in the North and the Caucasus Mountains in the South.<sup>23</sup> The sentiment of restoring the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in one or other form is still alive. In their study, O'Loughlin and Talbot asked common Russians about their views of expansion. More than 50 percent supported the idea to incorporate Estonia into Russia. Over 75 percent were clear that they should expand at the expense of Ukraine and Belorussia. <sup>24</sup>

The power of the USSR was mainly military and ideological. Today's Russia is not able to copy the former great power- it is looking for new ways. One Grand Strategic option for Russia is to seek bigger influence by using hard power, as in the case of Georgia in 2008. The other option is soft power, such as promoting Russian culture and language or by supporting the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russian military power in the Nordic-Baltic region is on the rise. Military reform is drastically changing Russian military capabilities close to the Estonian borders. The

'ends' of the Russia's military reforms, which until recently were called "Serdjukov's military reforms", are:

- 1) Russian military reform shows that the main concerns for Russia are still US (NATO) and internal problems – the mass army needed to defend against China in the East is about to being significantly reduced.
- 2) The high readiness Russian forces in the Baltic region give Russia strategic superiority in the initial stages of conflict, and the Putin regime is placing them on the borders of peaceful Northern-Europe.

Russian officials rushed to claim that the Russian military reform will go on even without recently fired Defense Minister Serdjukov.<sup>25 26</sup>

The four main 'ways' of the reform are:

- 1) Restructure the officer and NCO corps, with more emphasis on platoon-company level leadership. Reshaping a system of military education.
- 2) Reorganizing the Soviet style command and control system, similar to the US Army BCT concept.
- 3) Improving a mobilization and combat readiness system.
- 4) Ambitious weapons system modernization, where, according to Dmitry Rogozin Russia will allocate over 20 trillion rubles (668 billion U.S. dollars) for the program until 2020, and an extra three trillion rubles (100 billion dollars) for modernizing the defense sector.<sup>27</sup>

Military reform is ongoing, but there seems to be no consensus among Russian elites and military experts about the reform and its magnitude.

Russia has demonstrated its ability to adapt and use hard and soft power in combination. What is most concerning in Russian use of power are the means and objectives – they are apart from Baltic national self interests and values, often illegal by any standards. As six years ago, “The Economist”, a British journal, talking about Estonian-Russian issues, maybe even too openly, put it: “Estonia's biggest advantage is Russia's stupidity...Russia remains a rather ineffective bully. But the unsettling question remains—not just for Estonia, Georgia and Poland, but for everyone—what happens if once, just once, Russia played its cards wisely and well?”<sup>28</sup>

Since 2011, Putin's regime has been actively promoting the idea of “Eurasian Union” under Russian leadership. According to the Nikolas Gvosdev, professor of national-security studies at the U.S. Naval War College and a senior editor at “The National Interests” :’ But Putin would like to see more of the old Soviet (and Imperial-era) linkages restored, with trade, resources and labor flowing between Russia and its neighbors. This would keep Moscow as the economic center of the area’<sup>29</sup>.

In his book *The Future of Power* Joseph S. Nye states: “Many Russian futures are possible. At one extreme are those who project decline and see Russia as a “one-crop” economy with corrupt institutions and insurmountable demographic and health problems. Others argue that with reforms and modernization, Russia will be able to surmount these problems...”<sup>30</sup>

In any case, strong or weak, Russia remains a danger to its neighbors, until it is fully democratic and seeking good neighboring relations based on common profits and understanding.

### 2.3. Foreseeable changes in global and regional security environment

*‘ ... the idea of the future being different from the present is so repugnant to our conventional modes of thought and behavior that we, most of us, offer a great resistance to acting on it in practice ‘*

*John Maynard Keynes*

The US is a main NATO ally and key security partner for Europe. Traditionally, a US military presence has been the single most important deterrence factor, and as such, a clear sign of US commitment. Estonia has a vital security interest in to maintaining and developing this trans-Atlantic cooperation.

To meet changing US economic and security interests, US President Barack Obama’s new strategy foresees a pivot toward the Asia-Pacific. The Strategic Guidance published in January 2012 refers to the necessity to re-balance toward the Asia-Pacific, as the region has become the center of global politics. The strategy clearly states that the US continues to have interests and responsibilities in Europe as well: “In keeping with this evolving strategic landscape, our posture in Europe must also evolve. As this occurs, the United States will maintain our Article 5 commitments to allied security and promote enhanced capacity and interoperability for coalition operations.”<sup>31</sup>

From the Estonian point of view, it is especially important that the US remains involved in Europe and that NATO maintains its capability for full scale Article 5 Operations. The RAND Corporation study *NATO and the Challenges of Austerity* (2012) suggests that, in light of uncoordinated budgetary cuts and declining US interest and capabilities:

The United States should urge Germany to maintain a robust ground force for this purpose. At the same time, Berlin should be encouraged to intensify defense co-operation with Poland within the framework of the Weimar Triangle and to work closely with Denmark and Sweden to ensure the security of the Baltic region. In addition, defense cooperation between NATO and Sweden and Finland should be strengthened.<sup>32</sup>

If this is a future framework for regional security, Estonia needs to co-operate closely, clearly address its security concerns, and help work out new arrangements.

For the US, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with the impact of the financial crisis on its budget plus foreseeable issues with economic growth and financial stability, may have implications for the nature or extent of US involvement in future crises in Europe. The US Department of Defense states in “Defense Budget Priorities and Choices”, that:

The US military is still fighting in Afghanistan, countering violent extremism in other areas, and confronting a variety of emerging security challenges. Moreover, the post-Cold War drawdown was preceded by a decade long defense build-up that emphasized procurement and modernization, resulting in a smaller but mostly new, relatively unused, and technically superior inventory of U.S. military equipment. By contrast, notwithstanding the large budget increases in the base defense budget over the past decade - including funding for weapons development and acquisition we still have significant gaps in modernization that will need to be filled in coming years.<sup>33</sup>

Many Estonians look to the US as a real champion of the Free World and the main guarantor of liberal values, especially in the light of the relative decline of European power to do so. In her article preceding the official strategy of the Asia-Pacific Pivot, Hillary Clinton wrote: ‘Europe, home to most of our traditional allies, is still a partner of first resort, working alongside the United States on nearly every urgent global challenge, and we are investing in updating the structures of our alliance.’<sup>34</sup>



### 2.3.1. The European Union's foreign and security policy issues

European Union foreign policy, which is closely related to its security policy, is still the object of fundamental discussion. The real question is: are the member states' interests big enough and readiness strong enough to surrender parts of their rights as independent states to achieve their goals through the European Union? The last European Union Common Security Strategy was developed in 2003. The world has changed since then.

Understanding of the strategic environment, threats facing Europe, and desired end states are different across the Europe. "Old Europe", especially France, is concerned about developments in Africa. Poland, Norway, Lithuania and some others, are worried about the Eastern borders of the European Union (Russia-Belorussia). Estonian President Toomas-Hendrik Ilves pointed out, that in the European External Action Service (EU foreign affairs service) there is a problem with representation: "In situation where 100 millions of peoples from East-Europe are represented with two persons and 10 million Belgium with seven; isn't right way to raise the people's trust that European Union foreign policy is in their best interests."<sup>35</sup>

The division in opinions and threat perception, along with uncertainty about the European Union's future, has prevented the translation of European economical strength to military power. European capability to support foreign policy arguments by military means is reducing significantly. The RAND Corporation's study prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense points out: "The air, land, and sea forces of key European allies are reaching the point at which they can perform only one moderate-sized operation at a time and will be hard-pressed to meet the rotation requirements of

a protracted, small-scale irregular warfare mission.”<sup>36</sup> To deter Russia or fulfill military tasks inside Europe as well as on its frontiers, quantitatively bigger and qualitatively better European forces are needed. This is especially so in light of current US policy – the pivot toward Asia-Pacific.

The problems of Europe are deeper than lack of political will. Financial crisis, demographic issues, and a relatively declining economy have had a long-lasting impact, not only on the armed forces, but also on the security industry. A 2009 study ordered by the European Commission in the depths of the economic crisis finds that, “the apparent success of a few EU companies should not mask potential weaknesses in the underlying competitiveness of the EU security sector.”<sup>37</sup>

Decreasing European power and unity is occurring in the background of rising Russian ambitions and its power building. Successful Russian military reform combined with relative rise of other types of power, can, in the long term, give to the Kremlin a false perception that it is capable of creating a situation where Western powers are to face a *fait accompli* when one or all of the Baltic States are occupied. This is only likely to happen with extremely weak trans-Atlantic ties, European unity diminished, and in economic decline. This kind of “totally black scenario” is not likely.

Estonia has always supported strong transatlantic ties, and has been active in solving European problems. Along the lines of the Regional Security Complex Theory, Estonia needs to develop its security ties further with Nordic countries and Poland. Among other sectors, military to military relations are important. EDF steps to raise its presence in Multinational Corps Northeast and its greater cooperation with NORDEFCO

(Nordic Defense Cooperation) are only two examples. Of course, there are also improvements that can be made inside of the Estonian National Defense establishment.

#### 2.4. Is the Estonian comprehensive approach-based strategy still relevant in the changing security environment?

The main direction of Estonian National Security Policy since the 1990's after restoring independence, has been clear: a consensus-based decision to integrate with NATO and the EU. Estonian National Security Strategy and defense doctrines have made significant developments in the past twenty years. The environment has been dynamic; the development of a national security system has occurred quickly, and knowledge has been deepened significantly in the process.

The comprehensive approach and the international cooperation-based security strategy are still relevant for Estonia. Today there is a clear understanding among experts in Estonia about wider security issues, securitization, and the regional security complex. As stated in the Estonian National Defense Strategy: "In this rapidly evolving security environment, the most serious potential threats to Estonia derive from hybrid and combined challenges and from a combination of internal and external developments. Therefore, national defense can no longer be limited to military defense alone. Only a comprehensive approach to defense can guarantee a country's security."<sup>38</sup>

However, Estonia's comprehensive approach can be further improved by emphasizing deterrence, deepening cooperation, and employing securitization as

needed. That leads to the question: How can the Estonian security architecture be improved further to accomplish this?

### **3. Estonian National Security System**

In chapter 3, the current Estonian national security system will be discussed and these suggestions made, based on security theories and observations made in previous chapters.

What needs to change is the national level command structure. A new structure must be able to employ national power in a well orchestrated and timely manner. Government as a higher level of executive power needs to strengthen along with national security professional expertise. This should not occur only on an ad hoc basis. National security professionals, according to Peter Roman and David Tarr, are professionals, civilian and military, who offer effective, intelligent advice in policymaking that requires a wide understanding of security and how all institutions concerned with national security are performing. Joint military professionals have an expertise and ability to think and act across the armed services, but national security professionals are able to deal with national level issues.<sup>39</sup> There is a need to establish permanently a working national security bureau in order to coordinate the interagency process and support the political decision making in the issues concerning wider security.

“According to the Constitution of the Estonian Republic, the supreme commander of national defense is the President. But most executive power is trusted to the government led by the Prime Minister, who is the actual political head of state. The government directs and coordinates matters of national security; the Ministry of Defense

organizes military security, and the Ministry of the Interior ensures public safety and interior order – and so all eleven ministries have their specific expertise and important role in making a well functioning system. According to the Estonian constitution, the wartime or state of emergency will be announced by parliament (*Riigikogu*). By law, the role and powers of the president will significantly increase in this event. Command relationships and routines will be changing significantly in the most critical moment. However, it is not reasonable to change the command structure. The reason for this kind of legacy system is mainly historical. The crisis/wartime command and control system must be as close to the peacetime structures as possible in order to ensure continuity of work.

Based on the broader meaning of security and the assessment that an opposing power is more likely to use soft power (and in a more dangerous case hard and soft power combined) it would be wise to strengthen interagency capabilities under the Prime Minister. The best solution is a permanent bureau – a Bureau of National Defense, which would be responsible for coordinating policy on national security issues and which would advise the Prime Minister on matters related to security in a wider context. The Ministry of Defense would continue to fulfill its role for civilian control over the Defense Forces and other tasks as established by law. This kind of comprehensive approach combining civilian and military efforts, improved with better organization, will support Estonia to:

- Reinvent Deterrence as a broad civil-military capability-based flexible system, capable of foreseeing and/or responding to a variety of different security threats and ensure a well coordinated full spectrum and long-term resistance to any attempt to change Estonian values or way of life.

- Better coordinate its capability building between civilian and military institutions. For example: In Estonia, there is an ongoing discussion about combining the Ministry of Interior and Defense Forces helicopters to cut costs on infrastructure and logistical support. Unfortunately the helicopters are different types. Great trust and better communication will, in the future, avoid unnecessary expenses on parallel capabilities.
- Strengthen the military profession in Estonia by allowing military personnel to concentrate mainly on military tasks.
- Create, based on civilian and military career paths, national security professionals who are capable of coordinating the interagency process, and can support the political decision making on issues concerning wider security.

### 3.1. Main suggestions

- Change the Higher Command's organization and procedures to respond to wider security needs.
- Strengthen further a comprehensive approach to include all security sectors, and be prepared for securitization as needed. Have contingency plans for securitization of prioritized problems with short notice.
- Expand regional cooperation and build relations accordingly.
- Ensure that the Estonian military understands wider security concerns and is ready to support with its capabilities if requested by civilian authorities. The EDF's main mission will remain deterrence, and if this fails, to fight the nation's wars.
- Strengthen interoperability of the EDF and civilian institutions with its main allies. Prepare broad-based host nation support system.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the beginning of this paper the following questions were examined: If the global and regional factors are about to change, is the Estonian Security strategy, which is based on a comprehensive approach, still relevant? And a second question: How can the Estonian security architecture be improved?

The Estonian Security Strategy and the comprehensive approach used in it is especially relevant due to the changes in the global and regional balance of power. The preferable way to employ the full spectrum of Estonian national power is deterrence. Deterrence is often discussed only in the framework of the military sector, and even then, it is limited to taking into account actions across recognized international boundaries within a particular form of warfare. Based on the theory of a widened understanding of security, the other security sectors will be involved (and prepared to be involved in a timely manner). In a strategic context, an aggressor should be convinced that any aggressive moves will fail to succeed because of resistance or, even if militarily successful, because the pain inflicted by the use of the comprehensive approach in other security sectors (political, economic) outweighs the invaders possible gains. That leads us to the second question raised in this paper. How can the Estonian security architecture be improved?

In order to practically employ comprehensive ways and means the main way to improve the Estonian security architecture is to change its higher command organization. The crisis/wartime command and control system must be as close to the peacetime structures as possible in order to ensure un-stoppable work and not waste energy and time in transformation and rearrangements.

Based on a broader meaning of security and an assessment that an opposing power is more likely to use soft power (and in a more dangerous case, hard and soft power combined), it would be wise to strengthen interagency capabilities under the Prime Minister. The best solution is a permanent bureau, which would be responsible for coordinating policy on national security issues and advise the Prime Minister on matters related to security in a wider context.

Estonia has been highly successful in becoming a modern democratic society, with great prospects for the future. But security will remain a concern. A changing global and regional security environment has a direct impact on the well-being of Estonia. The best way for Estonia to stand against all threats is to find smart and practical solutions that fit its small size... and to think, strategically.



## Endnotes

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